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# Disaster News

## Alabama Disaster Aid Tops \$65 million; More than 84,000 Apply

**MONTGOMERY, AL.** — Approved disaster-related funding to aid hard-hit Alabamians recovering from Hurricane Katrina now totals nearly \$65.3 million, the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced today. State and federal officials overseeing recovery efforts in Alabama said that 84,461 residents have registered for some form of assistance since President Bush declared parts of the state eligible for disaster aid on August 29.

Of the \$65.29 million approved, more than \$51.6 million is for 23,575 FEMA Housing Assistance grants to help pay for temporary housing and emergency home repairs. Other Needs Assistance, a state/FEMA program for necessary disaster-related expenses not covered by other programs, totals \$13.6 million in approved grants for 12,496 individuals and households.

Affected Alabama residents and businesses, as well as displaced evacuees currently residing in the state, are encouraged to begin the application process as soon as possible by calling 800-621-FEMA (3362) or 800-462-7585 (TTY), for the hearing- and speech-impaired. The lines remain open 24 hours a day, seven days a week until further notice and multilingual registration personnel are able to assist applicants in several languages. Internet registration is available online at <http://www.fema.gov>.

A brief snapshot of disaster aid in Alabama:

- Eight Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) are currently open and assisting disaster victims. To date 11,443 state residents or temporary evacuees currently residing in Alabama have visited the centers;
- Requests for housing inspections now total 65,815. More than 270 FEMA-contracted inspectors have completed 40,924 assessments (62.1%);
- As of today, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) had issued 51,281 applications for long-term, low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters and businesses. Initial loans totaling \$503,300 are already in the hands of early applicants. SBA also provides Economic Injury Disaster Loans to help businesses meet ongoing necessary financial obligations disrupted by the storm;
- In addition to meeting the needs of Alabama residents, the state has partnered with FEMA to develop alternative housing sites for displaced evacuees from neighboring Gulf Coast states. The Birmingham Interim Housing Facility is now open. Thirteen state parks continue to offer free-of-charge camping sites and two facilities at Fort McClellan now provide interim housing for 1,266 displaced hurricane survivors;
- Alternate temporary housing resources remain a high priority. More than 2,640 pre-placement interviews to assess unmet housing needs have been completed. Officials say that 352 travel-trailer units now house 1,056 displaced individuals. Additional units are being readied and deployed daily;

- The state/FEMA Disaster Unemployment Assistance program has logged 1,459 claims from workers who have lost employment due to the hurricane. The state has approved 282 claims to date;
- Currently, 181 State/FEMA community relations specialists are conducting door-to-door outreach in storm-damaged neighborhoods. Nine translators are assigned to help outreach workers connect with culturally diverse populations in affected areas;
- The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has received 3,508 claims for disaster losses due to flooding in Alabama. The federally backed program has 41,912 policies in force in Alabama;
- Public Assistance (PA) reimbursement for this disaster now covers 22 counties to help the state and local governments and certain qualified non-profit entities cope with disaster-related infrastructure costs. The eligible PA counties are: Baldwin, Bibb, Clarke, Colbert, Cullman, Choctaw, Greene, Hale, Jefferson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Marengo, Marion, Mobile, Monroe, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, Tuscaloosa, Washington, Wilcox, and Winston; and
- Of the estimated 1M-1.5M cubic yards of storm debris, almost 885,291 cubic yards have been cleared. FEMA reimburses state and local governments and certain qualified non-profits for debris removal costs but does not handle debris removal itself; and

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages the federal response and recovery efforts following an incident of national significance. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities to reduce the risk of loss in future disasters, trains first responders, workers with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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